

REMARKS

The Examiner has maintained the rejection of Claims 1-26 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Fierro et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,705,979 (hereinafter Fierro).

Applicants acknowledge and appreciate the helpful comments regarding the instant Final Office Action provided by the Examiner in a telephone interview on April 11, 2001.

In the instant Final Office Action the Examiner provides a Response to Arguments made by Applicants in the prior Reply filed December 26, 2000. In particular, the Examiner is of the view that Fierro reads on the claims "because the claims do not adequately recite the intended limitation of the term 'selected'". It appears that the applicant intended the term selected to mean that certain designated appliance of the whole are tested while others are not. As it presently reads, the term selected could very well mean all of the appliances since all of them could very well be selected." The Examiner indicates that further consideration will be given if the term selected is recited in more clearer terms.

While Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner as to the teachings of Fierro in relation to the claims as presented and argued in the prior Reply, Applicants have further amended Claims 1 and 5 in order to expedite prosecution. In particular, Claims 1 and 5 have been amended to recite "selecting at the system controller one or more notification appliances to operate" to more clearly recite the manner of selecting in the claimed subject matter. Therefore, Claims 1 and 5, as amended, are believed to be patentable over Fierro.

Base Claims 14 and 17 are directed to a test mode which uses a locally-activated switch at a notification appliance. By providing a magnetic or other locally-activated switch in each notification appliance, a technician can activate one appliance at a time (typically for a brief interval), rather than, as has been the convention, causing all of the appliances on a notification circuit to operate while the technician walks through the building to check that all of the appliances are functioning.

Fierro discloses a test button 56 that is located at interface unit 30 which places the entire system into a test mode. (See column 4, lines 20-34.)

The test switch of the present invention of base Claims 14 and 17 is not at the system controller but rather is at the notification appliance itself for use by a technician during testing and verification of that individual notification appliance. The Examiner has not cited any portion of Fierro that teaches or suggests a test switch located at a notification appliance. Therefore, base Claims 14 and 17 are believed to be patentable over Fierro.

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Applicants believe that the claims, as amended, are not taught or suggested by Fierro and respectfully request reconsideration of the rejection of the claims.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is believed that all claims are in condition for allowance, and it is respectfully requested that the application be passed to issue. If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this case, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at (781) 861-6240.

Respectfully submitted,

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MARKED UP VERSION OF AMENDMENTSClaim Amendments Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.121(c)(1)(ii)

1. (Thrice Amended) A method of testing a building alarm system, the method comprising the steps of:
  - (a) providing plural notification appliances connected to a system controller, each notification appliance having a test status indicator for indicating notification appliance test status and an alarm indicator for indicating an alarm condition to building occupants;
  - (b) selecting at the system controller one or more [which] notification appliances to operate; and
  - (c) communicating from the system controller to each selected notification appliance an instruction to operate its associated test status indicator for verification without operating its associated alarm indicator so as to avoid disrupting the building occupants.
5. (Thrice Amended) An alarm system comprising:

plural notification appliances, each notification appliance having a test status indicator for indicating notification appliance test status and an alarm indicator for indicating an alarm condition to building occupants; and

a system controller connected to the plural notification appliances, the system controller in a test mode selecting one or more [which] notification appliances to operate and communicating to each selected notification appliance an instruction to operate its associated test status indicator for verification without operating its associated alarm indicator.